

# Postilla

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## NOTES ON INDIAN BIRDS. V\*

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When my wife and I were in the Naga Hills in 1950, we collected two specimens of the Grayheaded Imperial Pigeon which I subsequently considered to represent the form *griseicapilla*, recorded by Baker (1928, FAUNA OF BRITISH INDIA, 5:204) from southeastern Assam, and extreme eastern Bengal. The Imperial Pigeon was the only species of this genus seen by us in the Naga Hills, where pigeons of this impressive size and beauty now seem rare, no doubt due to the assiduous attentions of the Nagas themselves.

Subsequent comparison of these specimens with birds both in the Peabody Museum collection and in the American Museum of Natural History in New York, from northeast Burma, Tenasserim, Thailand, and Indochina shows that the birds from the Naga Hills are distinct as follows:

*Ducula badia carolinae* subsp. nov.

Type: ♀ ad. (Y.P.M., no. 12042), collected December 9, 1950, by S. Dillon Ripley at Phek, eastern Naga Hills, Assam, India.

\*Previous papers in this series have appeared in 1948, JOUR. BOMBAY NAT. HIST. SOC., 47:622; 1948, ZOOLOGICA, 33:199; 1950, POSTILLA, No. 1; and 1951, POSTILLA, No. 6.

Diagnosis: From *insignis*, the subspecies of the eastern Himalayas and adjacent foothills and the Khasia Hills, this subspecies differs by having the forehead and crown overlaid with gray, the vinous or lilac-gray color of the mantle reaching only to the hind nape and neck. The wing coverts and edges of the secondaries, and especially the lower back and rump are distinctly gray, a brighter, more light color than the mouse-gray, or dull brownish-gray of *insignis*. From *griseicapilla*, this form differs in the noticeably paler, more grayish tone of the scapulars, edges of the secondaries, lower back and rump. This lighter more pure gray tone seems to invade the tail also, the terminal band being paler, more pure gray, although this may be due to comparative age of the specimens examined. Certainly no other specimens in the long series examined by me throughout the species have as light pure grayish colors in the areas above listed.

Measurements: ♂ ♀ ; wing 242, 240; tail 181, 173; culmen 21.5, 25.5 mm. Soft parts: iris, gray; bill, coral or carmine-cherry basally, distally brownish-horn; feet, coral or carmine-cherry.

Range: Eastern Naga Hills, and probably Cachar and Manipur south through the hills to east Pakistan as cited by Baker (*op. cit.*) for the westernmost range of *griseicapilla*, although no specimens have been available for comparison.

Remarks: It gives me very great pleasure to name a new subspecies of this magnificent pigeon in honor of Mrs. William Robertson Coe.

Among an interesting collection of birds sent to me recently by Mr. N. G. Pillai of the Travancore-Cochin government are four specimens of a pipit which I should like to describe as follows:

*Anthus similis travancoriensis*, subsp. nov.

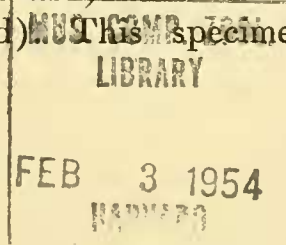
Type: ♀ ad. (Y.P.M., no. 23327), collected by N. G. Pillai on the road to Muthukuzhi, about 4500 feet altitude in the Ashambu Hills, April 15, 1952, Travancore-Cochin State, southern India.

Diagnosis: From *similis similis* of Bombay, Mysore, and Madras, this form differs in being uniformly darker above and below and with a much larger area of dark brown on the inner web of the penultimate tail feathers. The feathers of the upper surface are clove-brown edged, in fresh plumage, with dark tawny-olive. Below, this population is cinnamon rather than buff. The edgings to the outer tail feathers are darker, tawny-olive rather than wood-brown. In size there seems to be no difference.

Measurements: Type—wing 89.5, tail 75.5, culmen 17.5 mm. A male molting into fresh post-juvenal plumage is too small to measure.

Remarks: These specimens are so much darker than any other pipit belonging to the species found in India that I cannot understand how the single Travancore bird mentioned in the Ornithological Survey of that State (1936, JOUR. BOMBAY NAT. HIST. SOC., 38:764) was not commented upon at least. Were it not for the similarity in plumage pattern with *similis* and the locality, it would be easy to confuse these birds with one of the dark African forms. In this connection it is worth pointing out that in the specimens of *travancoriensis* examined, there is an important difference from typical *similis*. Baker (*op. cit.*, p. 278) in his key to the Indian pipits, separates *trivialis*, *hodgsoni*, and *sordidus* (= *similis*) from *nilghiriensis* on the basis of a very small pale tip to the inner web of the penultimate tail feather. The specimens of *travancoriensis* have large pale tips, nearly or more than a third of the total length of the tail. Of course they differ from *nilghiriensis* in the uniform tone to the plumage.

The Rufous Babbler, *Turdoides subrufus*, of Travancore—Cochin is a far more richly colored bird than the neighboring populations from the western Ghats of Bombay, Goa, parts of Madras and Mysore. Through the kindness of Mr. Greenway I have been able to borrow the type of Lafresnaye's "*Timalia*" *poecilorhyncha* (Neilgherries) from the Museum of Comparative Zoology (Harvard). This specimen agrees adequately



with present-day specimens of typical *subrufus* and so should be considered a synonym. However, Sharpe (1883, CAT. BDS. BRIT. MUS., 7:390) described *Argya hyperythra* from Madras on exactly the characters represented by my present series of Travancore—Cochin birds. I should like to revive this name, therefore, fixing the type locality at Palghat, and list the following populations:

- a). *Turdoides subrufus subrufus* (Jerdon), type locality, Wynaad.

Synonym, *Timalia poecilorhyncha* Lafresnaye, type locality "Neilgherries" hereby restricted to the northern slopes of the Nilgiris, as this species does not ascend to the summits of those hills.

Range: Bombay in the western Ghats from Mahableshwar south, Goa, Coorg, western Mysore, and western Madras south to the northern slopes of the Nilgiri Hills, and east to the Shevaroyes.

- b). *Turdoides subrufus hyperythrus* (Sharpe), type locality, restricted to Palghat.

Range: Southwestern Madras and Travancore-Cochin.